Fellowship in Prayer

"For a world united in prayer"

So live, that when thy summons come to join
The innumerable cavaran...
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained
and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

— William Cullen Bryant.

Volume X **OCTOBER, 1959** Number 5

OUR PURPOSE

"To promote the practice of prayer among *all* religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind."

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

22 E. 29th Street New York 16, N.Y.

Volume X October, 1959 Number 5

So much to do;
So little time to do it.

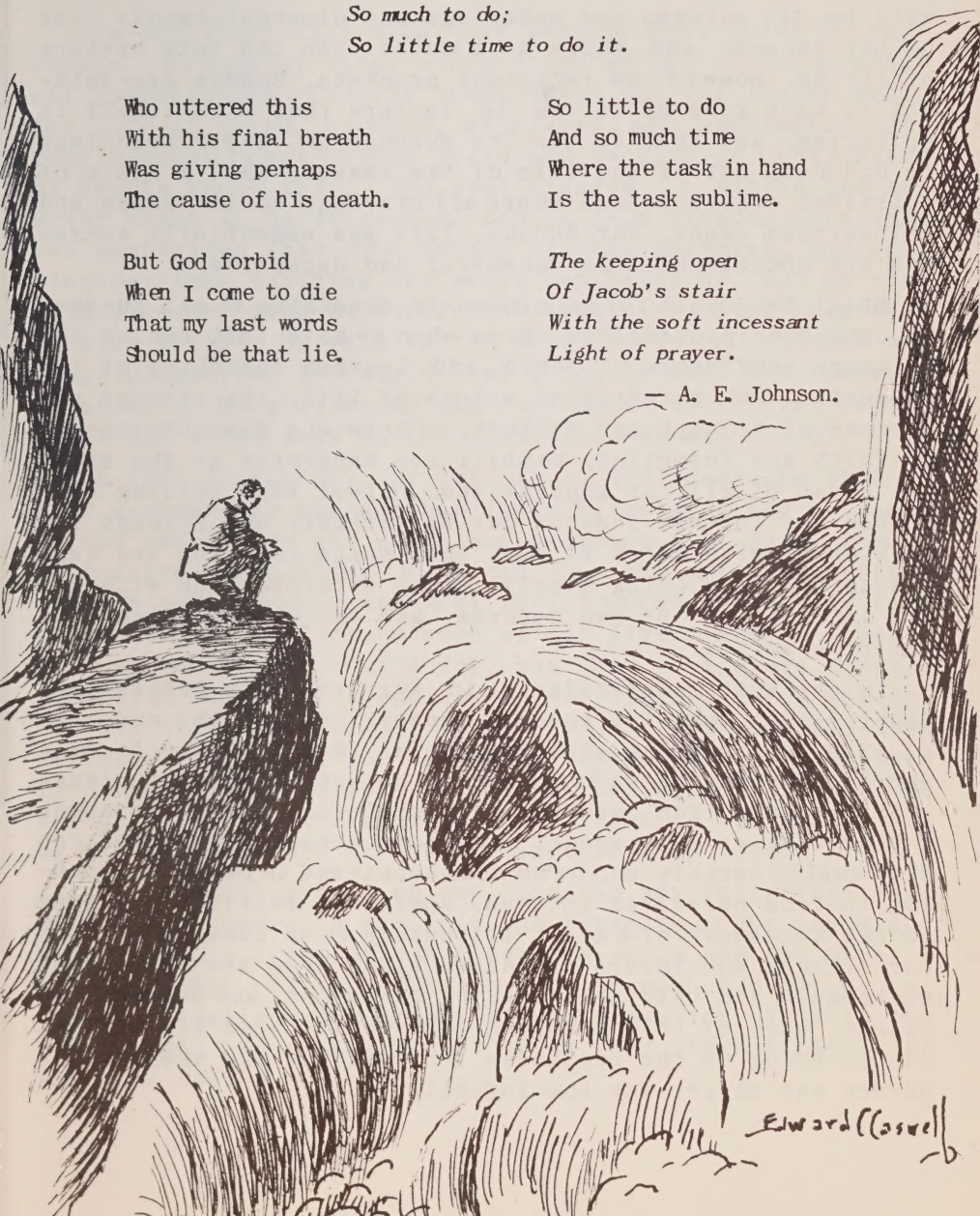
Who uttered this
With his final breath
Was giving perhaps
The cause of his death.

But God forbid
When I come to die
That my last words
Should be that lie.

So little to do
And so much time
Where the task in hand
Is the task sublime.

The keeping open
Of Jacob's stair
With the soft incessant
Light of prayer.

— A. E. Johnson.



THE SEARCH FOR OUR SELVES

Youth confronts the world with an eagerness born of innocence and hope, before the hard and bitter lessons of life have burned themselves into its heart. Rare is the young man or woman who senses what the real course of their life will be, the sorrows and sufferings and disappointments that no one escapes and which seem woven into the very texture of living. Some of the religious prophets, Buddha pre-eminently, have gone so far as to declare that life itself is suffering, and that it was the purpose of their teachings to find a way out of the life of the senses, into a realm of spiritual consciousness where all cravings would vanish and all sorrows cease. For Buddha, life was essentially sorrow and its occasional joys ephemeral and deceptive.

Still the quest for happiness is something we all pursue. We cannot help ourselves. Even when we have left behind the illusory confidence of youth and learned something of the enigmatic and paradoxical nature of life, its strange sequences of triumph and failure, of hope and discouragement, of faith and dejection, we still see happiness as the eternal quest of all our aspirations. We feel that abiding happiness and joy are somehow our birthright; and perhaps the conviction with which we feel this means that joy and happiness, far from being a prize to be attained from without, are integral to our own natures, are the very substance of our true selves.

In the West, particularly in America, many people seek happiness in material goods, in money, houses, the comforts of life, or in sense gratifications. But the flaw in this approach is that there is no end of objects to give us pleasure. We can go from one to another endlessly and there comes a time when we must wonder if objects outside ourselves can ever really satisfy us. Or we seek happiness in people, thinking to find ourselves in them, hoping to fulfill our lives in the framework of a great friendship or an ideal love. But our friends and lovers are human also, they are plagued by weaknesses and unfulfillments of their own, and being finite beings, each of them changing throughout their lives, they cannot bring us the happiness we really seek, they cannot quench our thirst for the infinite.

For infinite in reality we are and Truth is not something outside us to which we hope to attain, it is the very nature of our souls. Perfection, everlasting joy and divine peace are the substance of our innermost beings and all the philosophies and religions that attempt to reach them are only projections of our own real natures, of the divinity that is within each of us.

The spiritual life alone can satisfy this quest for happiness, the life of inner exploration of our minds, of gradual renunciation of fading substitutes for the joy we seek, the life of faith, of hope, of prayer and meditation. Our real kingdom is not of this world and each of us in his heart of hearts knows this. The real kingdom is within and was never meant to be otherwise, and it is a kingdom more vast and mysterious than the entire visible universe, and more glorious than anything the world can offer us. Let us seek that kingdom. Then we shall know something of the happiness we have sought in vain in the outer world of objects and sense pleasures, the world that today is here and tomorrow is no more, the glittering and evanescent world that exists for a few short days in the whole life of man's soul.

In this search for our self it is indispensable that we find someone who already has found himself, a man or woman of God whose life and words and presence will inspire us to go forward as nothing else can do, who in a mysterious fashion will communicate to us truths and understanding that will revolutionize the course of our lives. Such a teacher must be sought and waited for, and when he appears we will recognize him as we recognize the sun rising out of the uncertain shadows of dawn. If we have not met such a person we cannot say that we have truly lived, for without them in our lives we can form no idea of the nobility, love and grandeur the human character can attain to, of what a man by the grace of God may become in this very life.

Through such people we can find the way that leads forward and upward—the way into the recesses of our minds and hearts, into a realm of consciousness where one day we shall discover what our true self is and, through His mercy, behold Him finally in the depths of contemplation. This is the only quest, and at the end of it we find eternal bliss, we find our selves.

« « » »

PRAYER

By Dr. Alexis Carrel

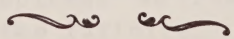
"Prayer is the most powerful form of energy that one can generate. The influence of prayer on the human mind and body is as demonstrable as that of secreting glands. Its results can be measured in terms of increased physical buoyancy, greater intellectual vigor, moral stamina, and a deeper understanding of the realities underlying human relationships.

"If you make a habit of sincere prayer your life will be profoundly altered. Prayer stamps with its indelible mark our actions and demeanor. A tranquility of bearing, a facial and bodily repose are observed in those whose inner lives are thus enriched.

"Prayer is a force as real as terrestrial gravity. As a physician, I have seen men, after all therapy had failed, lifted out of disease and melancholy by the serene effort of prayer. It is the only power in the world that seems to overcome the so-called 'laws of nature'; the occasions on which prayer has dramatically done this have been termed miracles. But a constant miracle takes place hourly in the hearts of men and women who have discovered that prayer supplies them with a steady flow of sustaining power in their daily lives. Too many people regard prayer as a formalized routine of words, or a childish petition for material things. We sadly undervalue prayer when we conceive it in these terms.

"Properly understood, prayer is a mature activity indispensable to the fullest development of personality--the ultimate integration of man's highest faculties. Only in prayer do we achieve that complete and harmonious assembly of body, mind, and spirit which gives the frail human reed its unshakable strength.

"All prayers have one thing in common, and demonstrate the same truth. Human beings seek to augment their finite energy by calling on the Infinite Source of all power. When we pray we link ourselves with the Inexhaustible Power of God. Today, as never before, prayer is a necessity in the lives of men and nations."



GANDHI ON RELIGION

After long study and experience I have come to these conclusions: that (1) all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism. My veneration for other faiths is the same as for my own faith. Consequently, the thought of conversion is impossible.... Our prayer for others ought never to be: "God! give them the light Thou hast given to me!" but: "Give them all the light and truth they need for their highest development!"

The Allah of Islam is the same as the God of the Christian and Isvara of the Hindus. Even as there are numerous names of God in Hinduism, there are many names of God in Islam. The names do not indicate individuality but attributes, and little man has tried in his humble way to describe mighty God by giving Him attributes, though He is above all attributes, Indescribable, Immeasurable. Living faith in this God means equal respect for all religions. It would be the height of intolerance—and intolerance is a species of violence—to believe that your religion is superior to other religions and that you would be justified in wanting others to change over to your faith.

I believe in the fundamental truth of all great religions of the world. I believe that they are all God-given and I believe that they were necessary for the people to whom these religions were revealed. And I believe that if only we could all of us read the scriptures of the different faiths from the standpoint of the followers of these faiths, we should find that they were at the bottom all one and were all helpful to one another.

Belief in one God is the cornerstone of all religions. But I do not foresee a time when there would be only one religion on earth in practice. In theory, since there is one God, there can be only one religion. But in practice, no two persons I have known have had the same identical conception of God. Therefore, there will perhaps always be different religions answering to different temperaments and climatic conditions.

— Mahatma Gandhi, 1869-1948.

"IN THE MIDST OF THE YEARS"

A MESSAGE FOR THE MIDDLE AGED

By W. J. Thompson, D.D.

"I have read your articles addressed to young people," a correspondent states, "and also to those in advanced years, but I write this to inquire if you have a message for middled-aged folk. Youth has plans for the future, and old age turns to memories, but what is there for us who belong within the middle period, who bear the heat and burden of life's 'noon-day'? It seems to me that middle-aged men and women are the ones who need special encouragement and inspiration. You will find them everywhere—in the office, the factory, the stores and the homes—carrying the heaviest responsibilities in business, giving guidance to youth and assistance to old age. In these hectic days, filled with stress and strain, mature persons who have reached middle age are the very ones who need a message of recognition and appreciation."

There is one other thing my correspondent did not mention, which would have strengthened his plea for a special message to middle-aged people. It is a perilous period, which might be described in the words of the Psalmist as "the destruction that wasteth at noonday" *(Psalm 91:6)*. There is a disease known as "middle age blues"!

This malady cripples vast numbers of individuals. Its symptoms are a profound discontent with life, accompanied by a feeling of futility. A business man was approached by a friend who asked, "What do you do when you know for sure that you have reached the end of your achievements?" This man had a good position and a fine family, but he was greatly depressed because he thought of himself as a man who had arrived at the end of his creative powers.

This is just one illustration out of many of "the destruction that wasteth at noonday." There is the middle-aged wife and mother who feels that since her children have grown and gone away, therefore her usefulness is over, and she is no longer needed.

This dangerous foolishness is due to a mistaken view of life. "Middle age has been in the world for a long time, yet it catches many people by surprise." This statement by a gifted newspaper writer clearly expresses the situa-

tion. So many are filled with dismay at the thought of being "middle-aged," when they should be thanking God for such a privilege.

It is time for these folk to wake up and realize that middle age is not a descent into the dungeon of despair, but is merely a bend in the road of life, leading to wonderful experiences and opportunities ahead. The fact that a man or woman has reached middle age is no sign of dissolution, but of development. The mastery of the art of living demands that we bravely face and accept each change of life's situations, and then proceed to make good use of them.

God has arranged life in different stages, and the way to satisfaction, serenity and success is to "fit in" with the Divine Plan, and not try to cling to a stage of life that is over.

"Life must go on," Anne Morrow Lindbergh declares. "All living relationships are in process of change, and must perpetually be building themselves new forms."

And this includes the various stages found in our own lives. This is really an inspiring truth. Life is constant change, and things move, not because they are unstable, but because a Divine impulse urges and impels them forward. The stars travel, not because they are lost in the sky, but for the reason that they are servants of a sublime order, and follow a Heavenly Plan.

All this is a Divine Prophecy of our own wonderful destiny. Our security lies not in looking back to youth in nostalgia, nor forward in foreboding to old age, but accepting life as it now is—in middle age—and making the very best of it.

The words found in the Old Testament, in Habakkuk, Chapter 3, verse 2, well describe every man and woman privileged to reach middle age—"In the midst of the years." The prophet prays:

"O Lord, revive Thy work—in the midst of the years make known," and he exclaims, "I will rejoice in the Lord, in the God of my salvation... The Lord is my strength, and He will make me walk upon mine high places."

Let this glorious confidence be yours in middle age; and with God as your partner, go forth to wonderful victory!

I want to wish you a very rich, deep, true, straight and simple growth in the love of God, accepted and willed gently but greatly, at the daily, hourly, cost of self.

— Baron Von Hugel.

MY AWAKENING TO RELIGION

By Thomas E. Powers

Liberty of choice is an odd faculty. Sometimes you are not only free to exercise it, but must do so. For example: (1) If there really is no God, and if you persuade yourself that there is a God, you are as deeply deluded as you can be. But (2) if the living God after all *is* the Reality of reality, and if you ignore that Reality because you cannot believe in it, certainly you are in the deadliest of all ignorance. These two positions never can be correlatives; they must be alternatives. And who can avoid choosing between them?

It *must* make an immense difference whether you decide for or against God. And when you decide for Him, it then becomes a matter of urgency how you orient yourself in regard to Him, not just speculatively but with the keenest practicality, in your breathing and eating, thinking and feeling, working and sleeping, coming and going—in your head, heart and stomach. This of course is where religion comes in, because religion is how a man relates himself to God. If no religion existed, any one man alone would develop something like it spontaneously as soon as he turned to God.

It is a peculiarity of our times (say, the past five hundred years) that men differ exceedingly about these things. They differ about God's being or not-being, and they differ widely indeed as to how human beings should behave under either hypothesis. The no-God people produce violently conflicting plans for the conduct of human affairs. The yes-God people are divided, often rigidly and sometimes bloodily, along lines of the different great world religions, and beyond that they are splintered into many hundreds of sects, each having a viewpoint which gives it some self-identity but which at the same time separates it from the great God-acknowledging community of the whole earth and also from other groups in its own spiritual tradition.

Obviously all this lies near the cause of the incredible problem of humanity today—epitomized in the daily possibility of whole populations being obliterated because of one man's miscalculation or loss of temper. How humanity is affected is something no one can escape. But big and pressing as it is, the humanity-problem does not come first. The first thing

must be how these things bear upon me as an individual. Each man's assessment of his own personal situation is indispensable to any real consideration of the whole question and must take precedence over the larger view. Fortunately men can help each other by sharing their experience—their failure, terror, strength, and hope. So I come to telling you where I stand in regard to God and religion, and how I arrived where I am.

It was not simple and it was not easy, but it was not dull, either.

I was brought up in a Christian home in the Middle West and educated in the Christian faith. My parents and teachers did not overdo it, but neither did they underdo it. By the time I was twelve I knew the main points of the faith very well, believed them, and took them seriously as commandments and guides in living.

In high school and in the first couple of years of college I came first to doubt the faith and then to disbelieve and reject it. Going along with an underlying current of thought which was at that time (and still is) prominent in some of the schools, I accepted as true the idea that religion was something belonging to the childhood of the human race, something now happily outgrown by increasing numbers of intelligent men. I became an atheist-agnostic-liberal-rationalist-positivist-humanist-scientist. I never was, and am not now, scholar enough to know how well this mess of assumed labels really fitted me. But one thing is sure, I actively disbelieved in the real-being of God, and I looked upon all religions with tolerant contempt as systems which were superstitious and false to the core.

So I began to live as a man without God and without religion, and it felt pretty good for a while! I experienced it at first as a kind of emancipation. Particularly when it came to morals, I felt so much freer, and I did a lot of experimenting. I believed that man was his own beginning and end, and that God was man's creation. I did a lot of thinking about it and talking about it. The arguments of the humanist brethren are all very familiar to me. I remember how cogent they seemed, how wise, how sane, how inevitable and unanswerable.

But then, gradually, the whole subject lost interest for me. I was so busy earning a living that I didn't have time for much thinking. I lived as so many men in our era live, entirely without

spiritual reference or connections of any kind beyond those which the unaided human intelligence constitutes in and of itself. From a lofty and eager humanism I slipped into a simple and rather fatigued egotism. From being morally free I became morally slightly loose, and then a little more than slightly, although at the time I would have called my attitude "modern," "advanced," "mature"—great names indeed for lying and cheating on the basic rules of existence!

Anyhow I had ten or twelve years of this phase, and at any time in that period, upon reflection, I would have congratulated myself on my philosophy of life. It seemed to me to be as intelligent and practical an outlook as a man could achieve today.

I came up to early middle age in this self-assured state, successful in business, commuting to New York to work, happily married and the father of a little boy, pleased with my fate.

And then the grace of God intervened. That is the way I see it now. It did not seem so at the time. It seemed like dark tragedy. My health broke, suddenly, radically. I was not just sick; I was knocked right out. I responded strongly and fought back, but a year later it broke again, worse than before. Over a period of six years I fought a losing fight, and then I had to take a straight look at the fact that I was defeated, licked, down and with no prospect of getting up. This was not merely my view of it; this was a scientific, medical verdict. From the doctors' standpoint I was at a dead end.

And beyond the doctors...?

Well, at first of course I assumed that there was nothing beyond the doctors. But then (and it was a doctor who suggested it) the idea came up that there *might* be something beyond the doctors.... And what would that be? Some kind of higher power?...Oh, I see...you mean God, don't you? and religion, and all that. Rubbish! Foolishness! Forget it. Leave me to my despair, and my integrity, please. Just forget it.

But perhaps you have heard about drowning men, and straws. I didn't forget it. I couldn't. I came back to it in thought again and again. Hating it, hating the necessity, hating myself for doing it, I began to grope. I began in spite of myself to reach out toward that hope beyond the doctors... beyond myself...

I do not know just when it was that I became sure that something was responding to

the hateful and hated groping. It became impossible finally to ignore the fact that there *was* a response. But the hatred spoke louder than ever now. It denounced the response as imagination, subconscious mind, wish fulfillment, projection, delusion, incipient madness brought on by suffering, etc., etc.

But the groping and the response continued, and at last I began to believe a little in the response and to trust it a little. There was one outer sign of the reality of the process: My health stopped losing ground and began holding even, at a very sick level, true, but still no longer sinking. The groping became a drive, and the hate turned into fear—fear that if the Something *were* true after all, I could not endure the beauty of It, the purity of It, and therefore the terror of It. But the groping drive was now a powerful movement which went forward of its own momentum whenever there was anything like consent to it.

And then one day, early in the afternoon, between 12:30 and 1:00 o'clock, there occurred with me something far more important than birth or death. I saw, as clear as the sun, what I can never describe and what I can never forget. And whereas at 12:00 o'clock that day I did not know that God is, but only faintly suspected it, at 1:30 I knew beyond all the arguments of the earth that God is, and that I am deathless in Him.

My life was altered profoundly. My health began to be restored. For about two years I was in a condition something like shock. It took that long to begin to absorb what had happened in that half hour. It took much longer to begin to make sense out of it in thoughts and words. Sometimes (not at first, but later) I seriously doubted my own sanity. At last I met another man who had had the same experience, and he was not only sane but a distinguished citizen. Then I met another such man. And later I began to encounter others who had waked up, but more gently in most cases. They talked to me, and they were wonderfully wise and tolerant and understanding. One thing characterized both the "suddens" and the "gentles": *they knew what they were talking about;* if they read books, that was incidental; their knowledge came from direct experience. Slowly, skillfully, with a rough kind of tenderness, God's underground took me to itself and nursed me and taught me.

I very soon joined a church,

that is, a company of fellow seekers of God. It was essential that I do so. I literally could not have survived in the regenerate life without this help. But it was a long time (five years) before I joined a Christian church. I had great misunderstandings to work out at the mental level and powerful resentments to deal with in myself. I resented the whole idea of "church" and the whole idea of "Christianity" so deeply that for a while I could not deal at all with Christian terms in trying to understand, first my own experience, and then other men's experience, of God.

But I desperately needed to learn, and I was hungry to learn. So I read the Bhagavad Gita and the Dhammapada and the Tao Te Ching. I studied Hinduism and Buddhism. I owe the East a great deal; she instructed me when I was very young indeed. But I learned from Sri Ramakrishna that one must not be a spiritual dilettante all one's life, that at some time one must stop digging a lot of shallow wells and must settle down and dig one deep one, and that very few are able to do that except in their own backyard. And I learned from Mahatma Gandhi that no one is fit to look seriously into another religion until he has taken a long, deep, grown-up-man's look at the religion into which he was born.

Coming back to Christianity in this way, I began to see that the tumbling confusion of sects was a surface phenomenon, that behind the mass of dead and live leaves there was indeed a very real tree, with small branches leading faithfully back to great ones, and they in turn springing from a solid trunk, with roots sunk deep into the mysterious Ground of all life and all creation.

So that is how and why I became a Christian.

As a last word, I must say that my religion has evolved along lines that make a great many of my fellow Christians unhappy. I do not enjoy this position at all, but for the life of me I can find no way out of it.

I find myself protesting against what I take to be the deadly falsehood of claiming, or, worse, covertly implying, that Christianity is the only true religion.

It seems to me that the larger part of all Christians are caught in this presumption, and I do not see how it can fail, as long as it persists, to discourage any hope of world brotherhood at the

very roots. The rest of the people of this earth are just not buying it, and in my opinion they right royally *should not* buy it.

I am amazed at how deep a gulf opens here between great numbers of my brother Christians and myself, and between them and the rest of the world. It is a gulf which I for one am tired of pretending is not there or is not important.

The claim of exclusive or pre-eminent verity for the Christian religion strikes me as being unnecessarily, painfully, and obviously false. It gives offense and creates misunderstanding where none at all need exist. It seems to me both intellectually and morally wrong. I see it not as "loyalty to Christ" but as group ignorance and group egotism.

Logos-Sophia -- Christ -- Brahman -- I AM—the Holy One of Israel—Allah—the Tao—the Dharmakaya—these cannot be different "Gods," different entities, different realities. The slightest acquaintance with the contexts in which they occur makes it clear that if they refer to anything at all, these words can only refer to One Reality. At the outside they may refer to several hypostases of the One Reality. But without doing massive violence to the plain truth, they cannot be taken as points of division much less of conflict either in God Himself or in men's true experience of God. This is not to deny and not in any way to minimize the essential differences in religions. It is rather to see what so terribly needs to be seen: the common Source and Ground of the different religions. If we are not indeed children of One Father, how shall we be brothers? Can anything less than finding our places in the House of God heal the enmity that has broken out in the household of man?

Yet many members of the Christian churches today still will not or cannot see this: That the Spirit of Truth in all religions *must* stream from the same Paraclete, the indivisible Holy Ghost, who is given to men by the mercy of God, through the same Word of God who presides over all worlds and all nations.

It appears that a majority of Christians today do not recognize, and even actively deny, the spiritual kinship of their religion with the other religions of the world. Against this bitter and dangerous heresy, I strongly protest. It seems to me that we Christians must purge ourselves of it, and that the time for doing so may be short.«««

FROM THE BHAGAVAD GITA

(Selections from the famous Hindu Scripture, comprising a dialogue between Arjuna, the spiritual aspirant, and Krishna, worshipped in India as a Divine Incarnation.)

The Lord said:

Thou hast been mourning for those who should not be mourned for and yet thou speakest apparent words of wisdom; but the truly wise mourn not either for the dead or for the living.

There never was a time when I was not, nor thou, nor all these men. Nor will there ever be a time when we shall cease to exist hereafter.

As in this body the embodied soul passes through childhood, youth and old age, in the same manner it goes from one body to another; therefore the wise are never deluded regarding the soul...,

There is no existence for the unreal and the real can never be non-existent. The seers of Truth know the nature and final ends of both.

Know That to be indestructible by which all this is pervaded. No one is ever able to destroy that Immutable.

These bodies are perishable; but the dwellers in these bodies are eternal, indestructible and impenetrable. Therefore fight, O Arjuna!..,

This Self is never born, nor does It die, nor after once having been, does It go into non-being. This Self is unborn, eternal, changeless, ancient. It is never destroyed even when the body is destroyed...

As man casts off worn-out garments and puts on others which are new, similarly the embodied soul, casting off worn-out bodies, enters into others which are new...

O Arjuna, both you and I have gone through many births. I know them all, but thou knowest them not.

Though I am unborn and of unchangeable nature, and though I am Lord of all beings, yet by ruling over my Nature I come into being by my own Mysterious Power.

Whenever there is a decline of virtue and predominance of vice, I embody Myself.

For the protection of the good and for the destruction of evil and for the re-establishment of virtue, I am born

from age to age.

He who thus understands truly My Divine birth and action is not born again on leaving his body, O Arjuna, but he attains unto Me.

Freed from attachment, fear and anger, being absorbed in Me and taking refuge in Me, purified by the fire of wisdom, many have attained My Being.

In whatever way men worship Me, in the same way I fulfil their desires...

Those who, fixing their minds on Me, worship Me with perpetual devotion, endowed with supreme faith, to My mind they are the best knowers of Yoga...

Those who, surrendering all actions to Me and regarding Me as the Supreme Goal, worship Me with single-hearted devotion,

For them whose hearts are thus fixed on Me, I become ere long the Saviour from the ocean of Samsara (the world of birth and death).

Fix thy mind on Me alone and rest thine understanding in Me, thou shalt live in Me hereafter. Of this there is no doubt.

If thou art unable to fix thy mind steadfastly on Me, then, by faithful practice of devotion, do thou seek to reach Me.

If thou art also unable to practice devotion, then be thou intent on working for Me. Even by performing actions for My sake, thou shalt attain perfection.

If thou art not able to do even this, then, taking refuge in Me alone, and self-controlled, do thou surrender the fruits of all actions.

Knowledge is indeed better than blind practice; meditation excels knowledge; surrender of the fruits of action is more esteemed than meditation. Peace immediately follows surrender...

Fill thy heart with Me, be thou devoted to Me, do thou worship Me and bow down to Me. Thus thou shalt attain unto me. Truly I promise thee, for thou art dear to me...

Giving up all actions, righteous and unrighteous, come unto Me alone for refuge. I shall free thee from all sins. Do not grieve...

He who, with supreme devotion to Me, will declare this deeply profound secret to My devotees, doubtless he shall come unto Me....

« « » »

A True Story

THE SUN SET ANGRILY

By Vivian White

All day long she had toyed with the idea of going to her mother and telling her off. The very thought of her mother giving her brother, Jim, money made her blood boil. The only reason she hadn't mentioned it before was fear of small-town censure. It seemed to her that Jim had always had his way with her mother. Why couldn't mother see through his little schemes? Well, this time he just wasn't going to get away with it. Someone had to tell her and, although she knew an argument would be sure to follow, still it was her duty to tell her mother what Jim was doing to her.

Margaret dressed and went slowly down the street to her mother's home, hating herself for feeling the way she did.

"Hello, anyone home?" she called out as she opened the screen door.

"I'm in here, Margaret, come on in," a tired voice answered.

Margaret walked on back to the kitchen where she found her mother peeling potatoes.

"Well, I see you are busy as usual. Just thought I would drop in for a minute on my way to the store. What are you saving these rags for, mother?" Margaret asked, noticing a box of wool things behind the kitchen table.

"You know me, Margaret, I never throw anything away. Good wool makes nice rag rugs for the bedroom floors." Her mother sighed. "I doubt if I ever get them cut into strips, though. Seems like I get slower every day of my life."

"Oh, mother, why do you push yourself so? You don't need any more rugs and I'm sure Jim and I don't want them—they are so old-fashioned-looking. Aletha said to me yesterday she wouldn't give them house room. Of course, nothing is fine enough for her. How Jim puts up with her is beyond me. Little gold digger, that's what she is, and silly Jim is too blind to see it." Margaret cut her words short when she noticed the frown on her mother's face.

"Now, now, Margaret. Aletha can't help being the way she is. I feel sorry for her at times. It isn't easy to marry a poor man when you have had everything handed to you on a silver platter all your life."

No one in life had been more conservative than Margaret's mother. Mother Wilson was left a widow at the age

of thirty and, since that time, had raised two children and educated them on a small miner's pension and odd jobs. Now she was old before her time. Her face was lined with the cares of years. Red-roughened hands were proof she was no stranger to hard work. Her children were gone now; yet she continued to be miserly about everything that spelled money—with one exception: her son, Jim. She had spoiled him and yet he had turned out to be a man who was thoughtful and kind to everyone. Perhaps at times he was weak but Margaret knew she always excused his faults by saying, "Poor man--he had no father to guide him and I babied him far, far, too much. It isn't his fault, but mine." With Margaret it was different. She was more like her father and needed very little assistance from her mother, had a mind of her own and knew how to use it to her advantage. Margaret's face showed how cold and bitter she was toward the whole world, as she looked in the mirror over the mantel. Mrs. Wilson looked up from her work and caught the ugly frown on her daughter's face.

"Well, what's on your mind, Margaret?" Mother Wilson asked sweetly. "Did Howard come home late again last night?"

"No, he didn't, not that it is any of your business. I wanted to talk to you about Aletha and Jim, mother. You know as well as I do, you can't go on loaning him money to keep her satisfied. Why, she would break the bank of England. Her ideas are perfectly ridiculous! Money certainly doesn't mean a thing in her young life." Margaret's voice carried a world of sarcasm as she hurled the words at her mother, knowing they would hurt, and meaning them to.

"Now, now, Margaret, don't say such mean things about your own sister-in-law. Why must you always see the wrong side of everyone? She is good to me in her way and so is Jim. Oh, I know you think I do too much for them, but I am sure they appreciate all that I do."

"Well, I'm glad you think so, mother, for I certainly don't. And that is just why I stopped in this morning. How long do you think you can keep it up? Last week it was an extra ten and this week no telling how much he will want to hold him over to payday. It would be different if you really had it, but you don't, and Howard and I are certain you go hungry at times to give to them."

"I wouldn't be that foolish, Margaret, my dear. Does

it really worry you that I care so much about Aletha and Jim? Why, my dear, I care for you and Howard, too, but you just never give me an opportunity to help you, except baby-sit with the children evry Saturday and Sunday night. Aletha and Jim have no children and so I help them in another way. I'm sorry if it upsets you." Margaret's mother spoke in a low voice and continued her peeling.

"Upsets me! Why of all things! You talk as if all this was nothing and I know it isn't that simple. You must have given Jim a hundred dollars since he married Aletha in January. I've had about enough of it and I intend to do something about it, since you are too foolish to say no to Jim."

"Margaret, for your own good, you had better let Aletha and Jim alone. You will only stir up trouble and to what avail? Have you forgotten I am his mother and it is I who should talk to Jim and straighten him out? Go on home, Margaret. All you bring me is worries. Why couldn't you have been more like Jim, instead of being so blunt in your criticisms of others?"

Mrs. Wilson softly sighed.

"Well, if that's the way you feel about me, I certainly don't intend to stand around here and be insulted by my own mother. When you come to your senses I shall return and not until. Tell me what to do, will you?" Margaret threw the angry words back over her shoulder as she hurried out the front door.

All the rest of the day Margaret busied herself with silly little household jobs, so her mind would not dwell on her mother and Jim. But, when night came and Howard asked her what she had done all day, she poured out the whole story for his sympathetic ears. He politely listened and nodded his head a couple of times and went right on reading the evening paper.

"Some day you will be sorry, Margaret."

Late that night Jim called and Margaret told him off. When she finished her phone call she slammed the receiver down and went up to bed without stopping to say good night to her husband.

Howard had left for work the next morning only a short time when he returned suddenly.

"Are you sick? You look pale," Margaret said.

"Margaret, something terrible has happened. I — I—I well, I hardly know how to tell you," Howard stammered.

"Did you have a wreck? I have said for some time now,

you drive far too fast. Knew it was going to happen to you sooner or later." Margaret looked angrily at him.

"No, no, it's something else. Your— your mother, Margaret. I found her on the kitchen floor just now and, oh, Margaret—I think—I think she is dead."

Margaret turned, as if to speak, and then fell into a chair, sobbing hysterically.

"Oh, no, Howard, not my mother. It just can't be her— it just can't be."

"You'd better call Jim," Howard said.

The next two days were like a nightmare for Margaret. The rest of the family took Mrs. Wilson's death quite sensibly. But no one could comfort Margaret, no matter what they said or did for her.

The day of the funeral Margaret and her family entered the church and she kept sobbing pitifully.

"Mother, mother, I didn't mean it—really I didn't. Please forgive me, mother."

Later, Margaret knew that many people were taught a lesson that day. Everyone knew the events that had taken place before the funeral. All, except the pastor, who was called from another town to preach the sermon. His text was taken from Ephesians, the fourth chapter, twenty-sixth verse, which read in part: "Let the sun not set on your anger."

* * *

"RELIGION is the first thing and the last thing, and until a man has found God, and been found by God, he begins at no beginning, he works to no end. He may have his friendships, his partial loyalties, his scraps of honor, but all these fall into place, and life falls into place, only with God. Only with God, who fights through men against Blind Force and Might and Non-Existence; who fights with men against the confusion and evil within us and without, and against death in every form; who loves us as a great captain loves his men, and stands ready to use us in his immortal adventure against waste, disorder, cruelty, and vice, who is the end, who is the meaning, who is the only King...."

— H. G. Wells, (1866-1946).

THE GOLDEN CHAIN OF BOOKS

By Bess Foster Smith

I am both humble and proud when I think of all the great people I have met through books. From what great distances of time and space they have been brought so that I might share some of their words of wisdom and beauty! I find it most interesting to trace, as one does his ancestors, the spiritual relationship of one book to another—ties that truly bind.

For example, the French philosopher, Jacques Maritain, one of the writers whose work is included in THE WORLD'S BEST by Whit Burnett. I would probably have passed this essay by as just another dissertation on art, but for the influence of THE DECADE OF ILLUSION written by Maurice Sachs in which he devotes a chapter to his youthful worship of his friend, Jacques Maritain. It was so full of sweet intimacies that when I saw Maritain's name among the chosen ones in the anthology, it was like finding an old friend.

So I read the Maritain selection in which the author credits Edgar Allan Poe with recovering the theological quality of beauty—that our love for what is beautiful is the tie that binds us to God. For it was Poe who said, "It is that immortal instinct for beauty that makes us consider the world and its pageants as a glimpse of, a correspondence with, Heaven. It is the insatiable thirst for everything beyond, which life reveals, that is our liveliest proof of immortality. It is tears over beauty that reveal a nature exiled by the world from heaven but one that catches brief glimpses of paradise."

Maritain uses this quotation to make clear that beauty of God shows in an infinite variety of forms and is absorbed by the seeking soul like dew. "Beauty," he said, "is a kind of good. It shines through all life and animal energy and all spiritual life and pain and passion. The beauty of a creature is the Divine in it. When our perceptions are open to see, we behold the face of God," for, he concludes, "Every light is a certain irradiation proceeding from the first brightness."

He explains art as the labor of man to create the beauty he feels lies beyond. It is a sort of borderline creation where spirit shines on matter. The artist, himself, trembles between earth and heaven and wears himself out

using material means to create a joy for the spirit.

Thus, Maritain concludes, art can never really satisfy. It only gives work to the restless searcher after something beyond, and makes him "turn against the wind" in search of it.

Since reading of Maritain's great spiritual insight I am not surprised to learn that young artists and poets were moved to seek him out. His home was half way between Paris and Versailles in the peaceful valley of Meudon. Completely enamoured himself, Sachs recollects that "He might have resembled Christ with his short blond beard, his hair longer than average, and bushy, his thin lips, his generous smile, his very blue eyes, which seemed to pierce through and beyond you to the Image for which they were prepared."

"Every Sunday," he goes on, "we met in the drawing room about four o' clock. There were priests, laymen, young catechists, students, friends and foreigners. To us, Maritain seemed rather miraculous. Of course, he did not realize this. He was too simple and pure. In truth we had only rather a confused idea of religious mysticism, and although our hearts were prepared by poetry to receive God, our minds did not know on what to build its moral structure."

He goes on to say that later some of the disciples "fell away," realizing that they had loved Maritain rather than God, but for this Maritain was in no way responsible. For himself, Sachs says this experience of his youth remained an oasis of peace in his heart throughout his life.

Another book that belongs to this family is LA FEMME PAUVRE by Leon Bloy. It is a French novel that Maritain and his beautiful Jewish wife read on their honeymoon. It changed the entire course of their lives. They were so uplifted by it that they visited the author and as a result both were converted to Christianity.

There is much, much more to be learned about this great man and much more that is revealing from the "accursed Poet, Poe," whose philosophy of the beautiful he expounds. These words are only by way of introduction.

Quoting from Carlyle, I, too, say, "May blessings be upon the head of Cadmus or the Phoenecians, or whoever invented books!....An art that carries the voice of man to the extremities of the earth, and to the latest generation."

GETTING WHAT YOU WANT

By Rev. Roy Wallace Thomas

Some years ago, TIME magazine told the story of a talented, self-educated Negro, formerly a bell-hop, who wrote a play successful both in New York and in London. He gave lectures proclaiming the simple message, "You can do what you want if you believe you can do it." Endorsed by distinguished men of Great Britain and America, he insisted that he believed simply in the lessons of Jesus Christ.

Asked if he thought he could become President of the United States merely by believing it, he replied: "Ah! If! If I believed it! But I would not believe that! A woman in London asked me whether if she believed she were Queen Mary, she would be Queen Mary. I said that there was only one sane woman in England who believed she was Queen Mary, and she *was* Queen Mary."

There are many individuals who fail to live up to their possibilities and who suffer defeat until they master their timidity. It is also true that there are things a man cannot believe so long as he is sane. He will not believe in the obviously impossible nor attempt it. We know where to find individuals suffering acutely from delusions of grandeur.

The assertion, "You can do what you want if you believe you can do it," has a catch in it. You must not want the impossible. A popular lecturer on prayer wrote in *Religion and Life:* "A soul's sincere desire is a desire that is always fulfilled." That is, you can have what you want if your want is sincere. The requirement is that you be "integrated with God and man." When you are so integrated, your wants or desires are sincere, and hence "always fulfilled." And according to this view, if your prayers were unanswered they were not sincere. Hence you were not properly integrated! I think that on historical grounds we must object to such a manipulation of words.

Was Jesus sincere in His thrice-expressed desire to escape the cup of torture? I think He was perfectly sincere, and certainly He was integrated. But after the third attempt He dropped his sincere prayer that He escape pain, and substituted a higher sincere prayer. His integration with the Father caused him to cry out, "Not my will but thine be done." He did not

hesitate at the cost, a price man will never pay so long as he is determined to get what he wants when he wants it and will not be satisfied with anything else.

Declarations that promise a way of getting what one wants have universal appeal. All civilized and primitive men are agreed that no thought is so pleasurable as the idea of being able to get what you want. Such promises capitalize on the conviction inherited from the belief of the primitives that there is a special formula, if you can only find it, for getting what you want. Practisers of magic always have one.

The formulas and fetishes used by men to get what they want have varied all the way from Aaron's rod, the philosopher's stone, the clairvoyant's crystal, to crude religious rites and "newly discovered secrets of psychology." Certain publications often carry advertisements in which the arts of salesmanship are employed to convince the unwary that some new formula has at last been discovered for getting what you want. Some of these pretend to a religious, and others to a psychological slant. They make special appeal to the unsuspecting primitive in man.

Modern genius has not yet been able to invent a Diogenes' lantern that will detect the primitive at sight. Primitives are found in the most unlikely places. A professor at Boston University came to class one morning chuckling over an episode of the previous day. He told us he had met a friend, a professor at Harvard, who suffered from a certain form of asthma. Upon inquiry he learned that his friend was improving and was enthusiastic about the cure. He pulled a string from around his neck to which was attached an enlarged joint of the stem of goldenrod caused by the sting of an insect. "This is a remedy I learned about recently," he said seriously, "and it is curing my asthma."

There is no formula for getting everything one wants or for achieving whatever one desires. This is a mercy to us, for our finite minds do not always know what is best for us in the diverse situations we all must face. If we should not desire the impossible, neither should we be content with less than our best. It is a cardinal function of religion to help us to find and to accomplish what is best for us. The brilliant poet and novelist, Mary Austin, wrote in the last year of her life, "I would hardly go so far as to say that you can get

anything you want by prayer; but that you can get anything you need for completion and fulfillment."

The way out is to try to see ourselves as God sees us, that is, *as we are*. "Know thyself." What we think we are and what we really are do not always coincide. It is not good to trust our finite judgment too much. It is wise to follow Jesus in the determination to seek and to do God's will. In this highest endeavor there is no better formula than the true and tried one of Jeremiah, which Jesus himself carefully observed: "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart"—with the whole self. This formula results in what following self-centered impulse never can do. It is the careful exercise of thoughtful, humble faith, which alone can fill one's cup of joy to overflowing, for it is the finite fortified and enriched by the Infinite. It is glad use of "the power at work within us able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think." (Ephesians 3:20).

THE UNFOLDMENT OF LIFE

When we experience a thing we can talk with authority. This is not true when we get things out of books. After all, all that we really know is what we have actually experienced. What we have built into our lives through experience can never be taken from us because it has become a part of us. It is these daily experiences—the making of new friendships, the deepening of our understanding, and the expansion of our consciousness—which makes life so beautiful and worth while. There is nothing in life quite so inexpressibly beautiful, so inspiring and so sustaining as the unfoldment of life itself. As the flowers in our gardens unfold in all their beauty and fragrance, under the power of our physical sun, so our lives unfold in all their beauty, radiance and power under the influence of the Sun of Righteousness—the great Spiritual Sun of which our physical sun is just the reflection.

All men are flowers in God's great garden of life; all made in His image and after His likeness. Some are just a little in advance of others but eventually they will all come through, bloom and flourish, to the glory of Him who created us and in whom we all live and move and have our being.

— Harry Halsey Starrett.

Let any true man go into silence; strip himself of all pretense, and selfishness, and sensuality, and sluggishness of soul; lift off thought after thought, passion after passion, till he reaches the inmost depth of all; remember how short a time and he was not at all; how short a time again, and he will not be here; open his window and look upon the night, how still its breaths, how solemn its march, how deep its perspective, how ancient its forms of light; and think how little he knows except the perpetuity of God, and the mysteriousness of life:—and it will be strange if he does not feel the Eternal Presence as close upon his soul as the breeze upon his brow; if he does not say, "O Lord, art thou ever near as this, and have I not known thee?"

— *James Martineau, 1805-1900.*

Who Love Beauty

You who love beauty,
Must walk with her at dawn
When night will kiss her coral throat
farewell.
You must hold her
In the shadow of the moon,
And feel the wound its flame will burn.
You must have the memory
Of her arms of wind that can caress
Or hurl you at her feet.
Cluster her pearls of soft spring rain,
Remember her perfume, drifting
From the wet ginger bloom.
But you who love beauty most of all,
Must stand before her shrine
And know the anguished pain
Of muted lips from a heart too full
Of wordless song.

—Zelma S. Dennis.

NOTICES and COMMENTS

TRUSTEE RELOCATES. Early in September our Vice President of long standing, A. E. Johnson, departed for Spain where he will reside for an indefinite period. He will be missed at the annual Board meeting early next year, for he has been for years a consistently loyal and helpful member of the Board of Trustees. We are glad to report, however, that he will continue his association with Fellowship in Prayer, and we anticipate receiving more of his outstanding verses as usual, a good example of which is printed on page 1.

HINDU SCRIPTURE. We take pride in printing in the centerfold excerpts from a celebrated Scripture of India, the *Bhagavad Gita,* 'The Song of the Lord'. The Upanishads represent, perhaps, the highest reach of Hindu thought and may be considered the basic text of Hinduism; but the Gita, which has been described as a bouquet of the finest flowers of the Upanishads, has proved even more popular through the centuries and is today more widely read in India than any other scripture. There is no doubt that it is one of the supreme religious masterpieces of all time. For beauty, profundity, inclusiveness and eloquence it stands with the New Testament and the Dhammapada of Buddhism.

COMMENTS ON AUGUST ISSUE. It has been called to our attention that the August issue included a larger number of articles on non-Christian themes than usual. Our reply is that all religions, in our opinion, are true and divinely inspired, that each represents an aspect of eternal truth mediated to humanity as only a great religion can do. Part of our policy is to promote greater understanding between peoples by publishing informative and illuminating selections about all the great world faiths. We think history is demonstrating the necessity of world brotherhood and cooperation between religions and we are trying in our modest way to abet this process. In brief, Fellowship in Prayer emphasizes the universal elements that all religious people share, rather than the differences that tend to separate them, and may be said to reflect the widespread reappraisal in religious thinking that is taking place in this age.

CONTRIBUTORS. Enclosed in recent issues has been a leaflet inviting literary contributions from readers. This leaflet has aroused an encouraging response, a good example of which is Vivian White's 'The Sun Set Angrily', the first piece of fiction we have printed in a long time. Miss White, who lives in Illinois, tells us that her story is a true one and that she herself was the organist at the funeral service in the last scene. We hope that the printing of her story will inspire others to send us fiction as well as articles for future publication... Bess Foster Smith of Weiser, Idaho, makes a welcome return after a long absence, with her warm and stimulating reflections on 'The Golden Chain of Books'... Also represented again after many months is Grace Noll Crowell whose 'Forever There Is God' we are happy to print on the inside back cover of this number... The sincere and forceful lines on Prayer written by the world-famous scientist, Dr. Alexis Carrell, were sent to us by one of our regular writers, Dr. W. J. Thompson, for which we are grateful... Usually we try to limit articles to four or five pages, under the restrictions of our present size. But when a truly extraordinary piece of work comes to us we do not hesitate to make an exception. This was the case with Thomas E. Powers' 6-page autobiographical 'My Awakening to Religion', which is one of the most interesting and strongly written pieces we have printed and has, moreover, the immediate and convincing impact of a genuine personal chronicle. We wish to express our gratitude and congratulations to Mr. Powers, whose 'The Secret is to Surrender' in the August number will be remembered by most readers... Once again Mr. Edward C. Caswell has enhanced our pages with an inspiring illustration, on page 1. Our thanks to Mr. Caswell, whose drawings have been a feature of the magazine for more than a year.

CHRISTMAS SUBSCRIPTIONS. We look forward to receiving this year a number of extra Christmas subscriptions to FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER as a gift to friends and relatives. We shall be happy to include a Christmas card to each individual receiving such a gift subscription.

BOOK REVIEW NOTE. We were so crowded for material in this issue that there was no space for our usual book review, but we hope to resume that department in the December number.

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FOREVER THERE IS GOD

In the beginning God, and in between,
And through the vast forever, there is God.
We can see his mighty handwork if we look,
And if we scan the pathway man has trod
We can mark his footprints traveling close beside
The weary and bewildered ones of earth,
We hear the gentle voice upon the wind
Of him who is our Comrade from our birth.

In the beginning he created light
That we may walk unhindered down the land.
He made us in his image, gave his Word
So clear that any heart can understand.
Though all else fail, this light will never dim
Along the way for those who walk with him.

— *Grace Noll Crowell.*

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